

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-05 TRSE-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /065 W
-----065872 130334Z /64

R 121605Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9340
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, EG, SHUM
SUBJECT: COPTIC DISQUIT GROWING

REF: CAIRO 15005

1. SINCE PRIMIN SALIM'S HELWAN MEETING (REFTEL) DURING WHICH PRIMIN, COPTIC BISHOP AND MUSLEM LEADER ARGUED CASE FOR "BROTHERHOOD OF CROSS AND CRESCENT" IN LOFTY TERMS, GOE HAS MADE NO PUBLIC EFFORT TO EASE MUSLEM-COPTIC TENSION. PRESS BAN ON MENTION OF INCIDENTS DOES, HOWEVER, CONTINUE. FOREXAMPLE, WEEKLY COPTIC JOURNAL WATAN CONTINUED ESCHEW SECTARIAN THEMES IN FAVOR OF NATIONAL EVENTS AND FEATURED MAJOR EDITORIAL ON NATIONAL UNITY PROMINENTLY ON FRONT PAGE. IN PUBLIC, COPTIC LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN AVOIDING DIRECT REFERENCE TO INCIDENTS, REAL OR RUMORED, AND ANY TRACE OF CRITICISM OF GOE HANDLING

2. WIDESPREAD RUMORS. ON POPULAR LEVEL COPTIC CONGREGATIONS ARE APPARENTLY HEARING, AND IN AT LEAST SOME CASES
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BELIEVING ALARMIST TALK. GOOD EXAMPLE IS ONE CHURCH IN PREDOMINATLY MUSLEM NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE PRIESTS TELLING FAITHFUL THAT MUSLIMS WANT TO CREATE THEOCRACY ON LIBYAN OR SAUDI MODEL. THEY ARGUE THIS MEANS SUFFERING IN STORE FOR CHRISTIANS IN FORM OF IMPOSITION OF ISLAMIC LAW INCLUDING DEATH FOR APOSTASY, HAND CHOPPING, ETC. PRIESTS ARE REPORTEDLY SAYING THAT COPTIC LEADERSHIP

BELIEVES ARMED STRUGGLE WILL BE NECESSARY TO DEFEND RIGHT
TO LIVE UNDER CIVIL LAW AND EVEN SUGGESTING COPTS MOVE
OUT OF MUSLIM NEIGHBORHOODS AND SET UP DEFENSIBLE
STRONGHOLDS.

3. RAMADAN ATMOSPHERE ALSO UNHELPFUL. MUCH OF TV
PROGRAMMING IS OF HYPER-FERVENT TONE AND SOME OF IT
SHOWS CHILDREN IN ADVANCE STATE OF RELIGIOUS
ENTHRALLMENT.

5. ON SEPTEMBER 12 AMBASSADOR RECEIVED TWO UNSIGNED
LETTERS FROM "CHRISTIANS IN EGYPT". FIRST STATED WAVE
OF PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS SWEEPING EGYPT AND COMPLAINED
OF LEGISLATION BEING ENACTED. LETTER ALSO CLAIMED THAT
CHURCHES BEING BURNED AND THAT SAFETY AND PROPERTY OF CHRISTIANS IN
JEOPARDY.

IT ASKED THAT THIS "FLAGRANT VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS" BE
TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S ATTENTION. SECOND LETTER ALLEGED IN-
CIDENTS OF A CHURCH AND HOME BEING BURNED NEAR FAYUN AND THAT
POLICEMEN IN PROVINCE OF FAYUM DOING NOTHING TO PROTECT
CHRISTIANS. THIS LETTER ALSO ASKED THAT SITUATION BE BROUGHT TO
ATTENTION PRESIDENT CARTER. IN ONE OF FEWQRESS MENTIONS
OF TENSIONS, AKHBAR AL YOM ON SEPTEMBER 10 CARRIED LETTER TO EDITOR
STATING THAT "CIVIL WAR WILL BE BREAK OUT EGYPT"
AND THAT "THOSE WHO SUCCESS IN DESTROYING
LEBANON WITH SECATARIASIM WILL FAIL IN EGYPT."
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5. COMMENT: GOE MUST DEAL WITH EXTREMIST ELEMENTS
BOTH MUSLIM AND COPTIC COMMUNITIES AND THUS FAR HAS
PREFERRED TO D SO BEHIND THE SCENES. IT MAY BE WAITING FOR
END OF RAMADAR FESTIVITIES TO TAKE MORE PUBLIC ACTION
BUT INCREASING TENSIONS AND RUMORMONGERING THAT CONTRIBUTE
TO THEM DEMAND SOME FIRM PUBLIC ACTION SOON.

6. I INTEND TO RAISE THE MATTER WITH THE PRIME MINISTER
DURING MY NEXT VISIT TO OBTAIN HIS ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION.
EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770330-1100
Format: TEL
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770975/aaaacqlqz.tel
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Litigation History:
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TAGS: PINT, SHUM, EG
To: STATE
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vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6c178648-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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